



OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING Pismo Beach, CA

December 12, 2014

STAFF REPORT: California Statewide Motorized Trail

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SUBJECT: California Statewide Motorized Trail Overview

Summary

California's Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Act of 2003 directs the OHMVR Division to assist in designating corridors for a California Statewide Motorized Trail (CSMT). The CSMT would establish corridors throughout California that accommodate off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation. The OHMVR Commission has established an ad-hoc committee to assist the CSMT project. Public and OHMVR Commission input are needed for developing a purpose and vision for the CSMT.

Discussion

The requirement for the CSMT is contained within the Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5090.44:

The division shall assist in the designation of corridors for a California Statewide Motorized Trail. The California Statewide Motorized Trail shall consist of corridors that are designated and maintained for recreational travel by off-highway motor vehicles, as defined in Section 38006 of the Vehicle Code, and that are designated for off-highway motor vehicle travel by the owner of, or other person or public entity having control over, the property traversed by the corridor. Portions of the California Statewide Motorized Trail may include lands designated and maintained as trailheads. The California Statewide Motorized Trail shall be selected and managed in accordance with this chapter. Trails designated pursuant to this section may be known as the California Statewide Motorized Trail.

The CSMT was not the first example of state law indicating the need for a statewide motorized trail approach. The California Recreational Trails Act of 1974 (PRC Section 5070) required the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to develop the California Recreational Trails System Plan (CRTS). The CRTS is comprised of seven elements, one of which included increased OHV recreation in areas and trail corridors. DPR completed phase one of CRTS plan in 1978 and reports on its progress every two years, as required by statute. In compliance with the California Recreational Trails Act,

DPR and the OHMVR Division produced a series of reports and studies including the element to the CRTS (1978). These reports provided the foundation for developing the OHMVR program that we have today.

In the 1980s, the OHMVR Division was designated to lead the effort to develop the California Backcountry Discovery Trail (CBDT) with other agencies and interest groups. The vision of the CBDT was to provide a network of recreational trails from the Mexican border to the Oregon border. The multi-use trails would be open to OHVs, hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians and would provide access to other recreational areas, facilities, and scenic destinations. The OHMVR Division signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management in 1989 to coordinate and evaluate routes for the CBDT. In 1997, the OHMVR Division produced a CBDT strategy and trail use analysis. To date, the USFS developed several Back Country Discovery Trails in California that include access to limited OHV recreation opportunities.

In 2002, the California Legislature passed the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Act (PRC Section 5090.01 et seq.), which established the CSMT. The current effort for the CSMT arose from the reauthorization of the program in 2002 and the OHMVR Division Strategic Plan of 2009. The Strategic Plan recognized the increased interest in a statewide long distance motorized trail system and set Goal 2, Objective 2.5 to implement the CSMT by 2020.¹ More recently, the OHMVR Commission created a committee to gather information about the process of planning, designing, land acquisition, cost, and environmental documentation for the CSMT.

There are several ongoing local and regional motorized trail efforts that could potentially assist in the CSMT project. A listing of some of these local and regional efforts is attached to this report (Attachment 1). The OHMVR Division Grants Program and the Recreational Trails Program have provided funding for several of these efforts.

Several stakeholder groups advocate for the planning, development, and maintenance of OHV trails, including the CSMT. The non-profit 501(c)3 organization California Trail Users Coalition (CTUC) produces OHV trail riding maps in California that include BLM, USFS, SVRA, and local OHV trails, and promotes interagency collaboration of OHV recreation. Their website, www.smts.info, provides a comprehensive list of legislation and history of the Statewide Motorized Trail System.

Public input on desired CSMT uses and facilities will be a crucial component of the OHMVR Division's efforts to identify corridors that can accommodate OHV recreation. This effort will be extremely challenging given the current fragmented nature of OHV recreation opportunities in California.

¹ California State Parks, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division. (2009). *California State Parks Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division Strategic Plan*. Sacramento: State of California, 53.

A multi-year planning effort is envisioned. The effort would identify CSMT corridors and evaluate existing conditions relative to roads and trails that currently or potentially could allow OHV recreation. A California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliant environmental document would accompany this planning effort and would evaluate potentially significant environmental impacts associated with identifying CSMT corridors. OHMVR Commission meetings are an ideal forum for gathering public input and developing the vision and purpose statement for the program.

Commission Action

For information only.

Attachments

Attachment 1: CSMT Local and Regional Efforts Matrix

Agency or Interest Group	Trail Name	Description	Reference
Backcountry Discovery Routes	Currently developing the California Backcountry Discovery Route	“Backcountry Discovery Routes [BDR] is a 501c (4) non-profit organization whose mission is to establish and preserve off-highway routes for dual-sport and adventure motorcycle travel.” The organization works with agencies and land managers to keep lands open for motorcycle riding; promotes motorcycle safety and responsible riding; produces route maps, GPS tracks and trail advice; and keeps a photo and video archive of routes. There are Backcountry Discovery Routes in Utah, Washington, Colorado, Arizona, and Idaho.	http://www.backcountrydiscoveryroutes.com/CABDR
California Trail Users Coalition	Statewide Motorized Trail System	California Trail Users Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that promotes use of recreational trails on public lands. CTUC produces a series of maps that cover large portions of central and southern California. The CTUC maps indicate motorized routes that are a component of a "Statewide Motorized Trail System".	http://www.ctuc.info/ctuc/index.php/maps
Inyo County Adventure Trails	Combined use designation of OHV trails	The designated trails would allow OHVs on some highways to allow riders access to businesses in Bishop, CA and the Owens Valley. Partnership with USFS, BLM, and Inyo County. A draft environmental assessment is being conducted for the trail plan.	http://inyoplanning.org/projects/AdventureTrails.htm
Lassen Land and Trails Trust	Modoc Line Rail Trail	The 85-mile rail trail runs from eastern Lassen County to southern Modoc County. The trail connects BLM lands at Biscar Reservoir to the Tule Mountain Wildlife Study Area. It is open to high-clearance road vehicles, hikers, bikes, and equestrians. OHMVR Division grants assist in funding ground operations for the trail.	http://www.lassenlandandtrailstrust.org/modoc-line-rail-trail.html
Oregon Off-Highway Vehicle Association	Oregon Backcountry Discovery System	The 1500-mile OHV trail system in Oregon is managed the Oregon Off-highway Vehicle Association (OOVA). An Oregon State Parks grant program paid for the initial work on the trail system. OOVA worked with federal agencies and land managers to complete and sign the trail system. The association provides maps and other information.	http://www.oohva.org/

Agency or Interest Group	Trail Name	Description	Reference
Recreation Outdoors Coalition	Share the Dream Trail	The proposed 109-mile mixed use trail will encircle Lassen Volcanic National Park and is in addition to the Lassen Backcountry Byway.	http://roc4u.org/index.html
Siskiyou County, CA and Siskiyou County Off-Road Riders	State of Jefferson Trade Route	Working with the OHMVR Division, USFS, and CHP to develop a plan for the OHV trail, including crossing points on highways.	http://www.themcccloudblog.com/everything/the-state-of-jefferson-trade-route/
USFS	Lassen Backcountry Discovery Trail	The 187-mile trail is divided into 5 sections; each section has an interpretive theme and discovery points. An Recreational Trail Program (RTP) motorized grant helped fund a detailed, 63-page Lassen National Forest Backcountry Discovery Trail guidebook, published in 2007.	http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5190656.pdf
USFS	Modoc Backcountry Discovery Trail	The 200-mile trail lies within the Modoc National Forest and has 42 miles of alternate (more challenging) trails. Much of the trail is single lane and unpaved. The trail goes through public lands and private property. There are 22 discovery points available along this trail.	http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/modoc/recreation/?cid=stelprdb5319748
USFS	Plumas Backcountry Discovery Trail	The 150-mile trail goes through the Plumas National Forest. The mostly unpaved roads are maintained for four wheel drive (4WD) and Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV). There are 71 miles of alternate, more challenging trails. There are 30 discovery points along this trail. An RTP-motorized grant helped fund a detailed, 62-page <i>Plumas National Forest Backcountry Discovery Trail</i> guidebook (2013).	http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5428383.pdf
USFS	Six Rivers and Mendocino National Forest segments of the California Backcountry Discovery Trail	The CBDT goes through the Six Rivers National Forest and Mendocino National Forest. The trail segment is roughly 200 miles in length and has discovery points.	http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/mendocino/recreation/recarea/?recid=25232